

California M E D I C I N E

OWNED AND PUBLISHED BY THE CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
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EDITORIALS

Public Relations at Home

Latest move in the public relations program of the California Medical Association is the offer just made to all C.M.A. members to supply them with a plaque to hang on the office wall or place on a desk or table. The plaque is addressed "To All My Patients" and carries the doctor's message that he invites the patients to discuss with him all matters pertaining to his services or his fees.

Designed by the American Medical Association as a public relations builder, the plaque is attractively made up and equipped with a back which becomes either an easel or a hook hanger. The A.M.A. has been offering it for sale at one dollar but the C.M.A. is underwriting this cost for its members in order to foster a good public relations medium.

Before making this offering, the C.M.A. public relations department made a trial run with the A.M.A. plaque. Samples were sent out to members in ten counties, with the request that they put them to use and let the Association know what reactions developed. Several weeks after these samples had been issued, a check was made to see if the plaques were in use and what sort of comments they had evoked. Results in the great majority of instances were that the plaque was in use and that doctors, nurses, secretaries and patients liked the idea.

While this opinion was not unanimous, it was found in so many cases that the larger distribution was voted. In the few cases in which the plaque was not in use, the reason most often given for not displaying it was that the practices in the office were already so nearly in line with the suggestions on the plaque that the printed message was not considered necessary. In a pleasingly small number of cases the sample plaque was not in use simply because the

physician or secretary just hadn't taken the trouble to look it over and put it up.

The old adage that public relations begins at home, and the thesis that the public relations of the medical profession is actually the sum total of the public relations of each physician with his own patients, take on added meaning with this new item. It is evident that with patients, doctors, nurses and secretaries accepting this plaque in its true spirit, the true meaning of public relations will be subconsciously brought home to each. Just seeing the plaque on the wall or the desk each day is enough to remind any of these persons of his own responsibilities.

Here is a demonstration of a simple mechanism with far-reaching results. It should gain widespread acceptance.

Madera County Medical Society

Welcoming the Madera County Medical Society into the official family of the California Medical Association is a distinct pleasure. Here, for the first time, the physicians of that county have an organization of their own, to serve as a spokesman and a protector of the public health and the ethical practice of medicine.

Fifteen physicians, formerly affiliated with county societies in Fresno and Merced counties, have become charter members of the newest addition to the C.M.A. family. Their petition to the House of Delegates for a charter was promptly acted upon as an expression of home-town rule in the best tradition and in accordance with the wishes of those directly involved.

May this society prosper and take its rightful place alongside its sisters in California.